Dec 7th

I feel that you will get out of patience wanting for this letter, but I have had hardly time to think, since I returned. My monthly reports were past due & I had to make them all alone, and there has been three times the amount of extra work that there usually is, this must be my excuse, I should, however, have written you a short letter, but for the Chaplains going just as he did which would remove all anxiety and assure you of My safety and now I must continue the events of the campaign and I am reminded, while sitting here in my warm cosey tent with everything fixed up and arranged to my satisfaction, of the capture that I made on the morning of the reconnoisance, which was nothing more or less than a good specimen of a small tent in which I am enjoying myself now We found a deserted rebel camp, — they got in such a hurry that they left their tents standing, and also left a large amount of quartermasters stores — I captured one of the tents and carried on my horse to where the Majors were coming along, and left my boy to guard it. — It is very difficult to draw any tents through the Quartermasters Dept now, other than shelter tents

It was about three o'clock when we reached Rossville, at a gap in Missionary Ridge & this was the extreme right of our lines. Sherman had beaten them back on the left, and made those gallant charges up the hill side of which you have doubtless read, and the enemy was gradually falling back along the ridge to where we were, sent we were just in time to prevent their getting possession of the gap (a strong position by the way, which would have cost us many lives to have cleared) - up the steep hill side our boys had not a man faltered or straggled, every man was in his place - there being four Regts in the advance of us and the ridge being narrow so that only two regts could be put in one line, we were mustered in the rear, and formed a support in the third line, &c - The first Regt up the hill met the enemy just at the brow and at a double quick charged on them, and drove them thirty or forty rods where they rallied behind some works, and here the contest grew fierce for an hour, we were close in the rear of the line doing the fighting and the bullets fell thick and fast, and the men were ordered to lie down - at this place I was standing by the side of the Colonel, so close that there could not have been a space of two feet, when a ball went between us just above our shoulders, which was the closest call I have had

At half past ten the next day, we started out on the Grayville road, following them up, and nothing occurred until after dark when we came in sight of the Rebel camp fires – The advance was now made quietly & cautiously – Skirmishers were thrown out in the advance, and for an hour we move very slow, but now crack, crack, goes the rifles and then a whole volley, but it lasts only a few moments, and a rebel Wagon train of ten Wagons & four Pieces of Artillery is surprised and captured, and after this is disposed of we move forward but slowly, feeling our way along, and before going up a range of hills this Regt is in the advance – three companies are sent forward as Skirmishers, and Col Bennett in command of them, when bang! goes a gun & perhaps another, I halt the Regt, but there is no reply – some boy is excited, and imagines he sees an enemy – so we go for two or three miles over the hill & down the valley, and every thing goes into camp but this Regt which moves further on, to place our Skirmishers as pickets, while the rest camp in a little ravine and sup on coffee & Hard tack, and lie down by the fire for a few hours of sleep = an hour passes by and every Man is sound asleep. except the faithful Sentinell at his post, when bang, bang – a half dozzen shots – our picket line is attacked! fall in! fall in! and in a little less than no time we are

For an hour they held us. But soon the command was given Charge! boys, Charge! and with wild yells of triumph, our boys fell upon them, and a complete rout & panic, was made in the Rebels, guns, and Equipments, Haversacks, blankets and every thing that would impede their escape was scattered in every direction, – What I have said of this running will not apply to them all, for this Brigade took in over three hundred prisoners, – these were exciting times; a total rout of the enemy, and we following them up on a run, stumbling over the dead and Wounded rebels, – Victory was ours, & a shout on every tongue, = We followed them until nightfall and returned to the top of the Mountain and camped for the night, and I made my bed on a pile of stones, – this whole ridge is covered with small stone, from the size of a mans head down to a hickory nut, and on these I made my bed, but Sleep I did not, as it was awful cold

The next morning was occupied in burying the dead, the Wounded had been removed the night before, both ours & Rebel

The losses in which our Brigade took a part, were very surprising to me; the enemy were under cover of their Works and our men exposed, & our loss was only four killed & twenty Wounded While I counted twenty nine of the enemy killed

rifles arms and quietly Moving to the support of our pickets but only a few more Shots are returned, & everything is quiet again — a Squad of Cavalry had rode up to our lines, fired a few shots, and retired, — and We retired and finished our Nap, with no more alarms that night

The following Morning We Expected our Brigade would have the advance, & this Regt the advance of the Brigade but a Div of the 15th Corps came up and was entitled to it So that We were Stuck in the rear again, but it proved a very fortunate thing for us — As it proved We had camped only three Miles from Ringold, and about 10 o'clock Skirmishing began in the front, and We were able to see, which gradually deepened into a fight, and We were hurried rapidly forward. — The Div in our advance had began, What appeared to us to be a Severe job; It promised to be but a repetition of What done at Missionary Ridge, on the left & centre; The location of the ground was similar, & the disposition of Hills forces such as to give them every advantage, — this force appeared small but the advantage of position, was worth more than ours —

The fight was conducted on our Side by Brig Gen Osterhaus with his division only — The Rebs had three pieces of artillery, but were not of much use to them — The mode of attack, and the

manner of conducting this battle has been disapproved by almost every one who saw it— to attack an enemy in front, where the men are in an open field, and the enemy under cover of a dense thicket, and to charge up a ravine, exposed to an enfilading fire and from both flanks, should not seem to indicate good Generalship, when flank movements were practicable, and promised the same results with little or no loss

Two divisions played in position supporting the first line, but did not discharge a gun; the fight lasted for upwards of three hours, and our loss was severe— over five hundred killed & wounded— The last hour of the battle I lost, for I lay down on the ground, and with the music of eight pieces of artillery, (five of ours having arrived and joined in the engagement) and four thousand Infantry I fell asleep and when I awoke the enemy had gone and quiet was restored

Eighteen months ago I should have considered it poor music to sleep by, but overtasked Nature and a constant presence with dangers, changes a man wonderfully.

The Rebels left here a large quantity of corn, which was fed to Loyal Stock during our stay at this place— The town is entirely deserted except some cripples and a few women & children, some of which followed us on our return

At four o'clock, on the day of the battle, this Brigade was sent out in the direction the Enemy took, on their retreat & I gathered the objects of the Movement before we started which were to capture a train of Waggons that had become delayed, but we were to late, and we found the enemy in considerable force, and it was thought advisable to keep out of the scrape, but remained occupying the position we had taken until after dark, we then built fires as if going to camp and withdrew

We remained at Ringgold until the afternoon of Nov 30th, — in the meantime the Railroad track had been torn up, & the rails burnt & destroyed by fire and every bridge — Rail road, or Waggon in the vicinity had been burnt, and this afternoon (30th) we moved out in the direction of the Chickamauga battle ground, & camped for the night in that vicinity and the following morning, assisted at the interment of the unburied, gallant dead, that fell on this Memorable field; — A greater piece of inhumanity, was never perpetrated than by Bragg in his treatment of those who fell at the battle of Chickamauga — The sight was a fearful, & ghastly one, — one Mass of the human body in Sculptured ones the field, all Stripped of their shoes, and many of their clothing — Some they pretended to bury, but all they did was to throw a little dirt over them as they lay on top of the ground, and the sight is now more hideous

them if they had remained untouched, for the rains have washed the dirt away, and leaves an arm, a leg, a skull, and often half the body exposed
I conversed with some women who lived near by, who said they wanted to leave them but Bragg threatened to shoot every man he caught performing such a deed
I will here relate, what is well vouched for, but I saw no evidence of it. The citizens assert as a positive fact, that after the battle of Chickamauga, that the ladies from Ringold, and some from the neighborhood held a Lick Lick on the battle ground, and that they severed the heads from some of the dead unionist Soldiers, & carried them around on poles, & others they fastened to the trees & Stumps, —
Brig Gen Enright, at that time Commanding our Division States this as a fact, & I cannot doubt it for it was corroborated by many of the citizens.

This Mournful Task accomplished, we took up the line of March for Chattanooga, and Camped near that place for the night, and Dec 2d reached our present camp our Starting point for the battle
I fear that my account of this Campaign can afford you but little satisfaction, other than as a record of my thoughts and feelings — I have had to write at amid a pressure of business, and a little at a time and I know it is poorly composed but you will understand the reasons, & I shall send it without an Erasure — I will write to you all, soon, in the Meantime write to your P.S. Send this to Ephraim for the folks at home as I { Ever loving A L
will not have time to copy it